



11th March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Update – School Funding Issues

I wanted to contact you to provide an update on current issues relating to school funding.

I need to add my voice to the thousands of headteachers pointing out this week that, despite intense lobbying of the Government and Department for Education, matters remain extremely challenging. In short, schools are still not being provided with adequate funding and resource to deliver the level of provision and support that is expected and that our children deserve.

Current Concerns

- Since 2010 school budgets have been reduced in real terms by 8% and by 20% at post-16.
- Class sizes are rising and the curricular offer is being restricted.
- Increasingly, schools are being asked to support with children's emotional health and wellbeing. Frequently, we do not have adequate resource to meet a growing need.
- Often, the most vulnerable students in our schools – those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – are bearing the brunt of cuts and schools are struggling to provide the levels of support that they are entitled to.

These issues are not simply affecting a few schools. They affect the quality of provision at Ely College and are common features across our education system up and down the country. In pointing out these pressures, I do not seek to make a party political point, merely to counter some of the misleading claims being made about record levels of funding going into schools.

In September 2018, over 2000 headteachers campaigned at Westminster in order to underline the seriousness of the current situation. This action was unprecedented. The 'Worth Less?' campaign group now comprises 64 Local Authorities and Boroughs, covering thousands of schools and millions of families. This gives a clear indication of the levels of concern felt by reasonable and moderate headteachers in England. Sadly, the Secretary of State for Education has declined to meet with headteachers to discuss our concerns.

We continue to recognise that there is not a 'bottomless pit' of money and also acknowledge that many local MPs from across the political spectrum are taking a supportive approach. We must make clear, however, that the current response from the Department for Education is inadequate.



Why we need to meet

- Headteachers want to contribute constructively to overcome current funding issues.
- Headteachers want to reflect the serious concerns expressed by families regarding inadequate levels of resource and provision especially for our most vulnerable students.
- Headteachers want to ensure that schools receive a much better deal when future Government spending plans – the Comprehensive Spending Review - are drawn up over the next few months.
- Headteachers want to indicate serious and rising concerns relating to the wider pastoral and social care that schools are expected, by default, to provide against a background of severe cuts to Local Authority provision.

Headteacher colleagues and I feel fortunate that we have been so strongly supported by parents and carers as we campaign for a much improved level of funding for our schools and pupils. We urge you to continue to make representations to your local MP and to the Department for Education and wider Government to ensure that matters improve.

We will continue to inform you of the facts and to campaign vigorously over coming weeks and months. A positive starting point should come from the Secretary of State for Education in the form of an urgent meeting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Spencer', written over a faint circular stamp.

Richard Spencer
Principal